

## ABSTRACT

5 An organic solvent extraction mixture which includes a first extractant which is a substituted imidazole or benzimidazole, a non-selective strongly acidic cation second extractant, such as a sulphonic acid ( $R-SO_3H$ ), to facilitate phase transfer of base metal ions from an aqueous weakly acidic sulphate solution into the organic phase, a modifier to improve the characteristics of the organic phase with respect to metal complex solubility to avoid third phase formation, completeness and ease of stripping, viscosity and phase disengagement, and a diluent.